THE SUBWAY

Recently produced on Broadway by the Lenox Hill Players, this original and appealing drama is an impressionistic series of pictures showing the struggles, aspirations and final tragedy of a young girl whose eagerness to enjoy life and establish her right to the pursuit of happiness, is crushed by the cruel coldness of a machine-made civilization, symbolised by the Subway.

R36s

Senior Play Class - 1930

Department of Public Speaking

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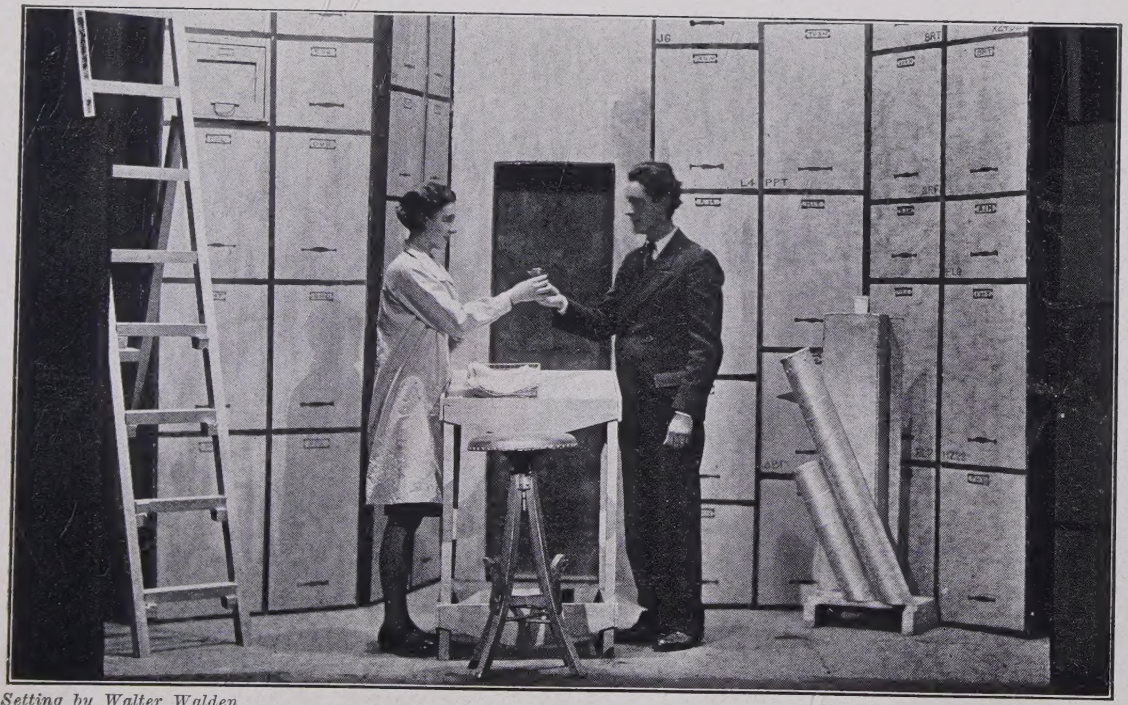

Setting by Walter Walden

THE OFFICE OF THE SUBWAY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

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1929

THE SUBWAY

A Play in Nine Scenes

BY

ELMER L. RICE

SAMUEL FRENCH
Thos. R. Edwards Managing Director
NEW YORK LOS ANGELES
SAMUEL FRENCH LTD. LONDON
1929

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The cast of the play as originally presented at the MASQUE THEATRE, New York, Feb. 5th, 1929

"THE SUBWAY"

A Play in Nine Scenes

BY ELMER RICE

DIRECTED BY ADELE GUTMAN NATHAN
SETTINGS BY WALTER WALDEN

CAST

Sophie Smith ..... *Jane Hamilton*
Mr. Smith ..... *Jerome Seplow*
Mrs. Smith ..... *Mary Hallett*
Annie Smith ..... *Evah Schwab*
Tom Smith ..... *Herman Bandes*
Eugene Landray ..... *Edward H. Wever*
George Clark ..... *Harry Jay Marks*
James Bradley ..... *Edward Martin*
Maxwell Hurst ..... *George Christie*
Robert Anderson ..... *Louis John Latzer*
Subwayites and Voices ..... *Syd Brenner, Adeline Ruby, Eugenia Walden, Sarah Shakow, Peter Gwyn, John Fallon, Jr., Arnaldo Mirante, Irene Seplow.*

Scene 1. A Filing Room of The Subway Construction Co.
Scene 2. The Subway.
Scene 3. Sophie's Home.
Scene 4. Sophie's Bedroom.
Scene 5. The Movies.
Scene 6. Eugene's Studio.
Scene 7. Eugene's Studio.
Scene 8. Sophie's Bedroom.
Scene 9. The Subway.

1.6192

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE OFFICE OF THE SUBWAY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY *Frontispiece*

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SCENE ONE

SCENE ONE

[*A filing-room in the offices of the Subway Construction Company. Three walls, solid from floor to ceiling with built-in steel filing-cabinets. On each wall is a movable steel ladder. The rear wall is broken by two doors, right of center and left of center, over and around which the filing-cabinets are built out, forming short passageways.*

In the middle of the room is a steel flat-top desk and behind it, facing away from the audience, a steel chair. Near the desk is a tripod-like steel device equipped with a spigot and a pipe that runs into the floor. There is nothing else in the room. The floor is of concrete and without covering.

A moment after the rise of the curtain, the door at the right opens and Sophie Smith *enters. She is eighteen. She wears a simple, dark dress with a white collar. She seats herself, her back to the audience, her hands folded on the desk before her. A great clock, in a distant tower, strikes nine, slowly and sonorously. As the last stroke dies out, the door at the left opens and an office-boy, carrying a steel basket filled with letters, enters briskly.*]

THE BOY

'Morning.

SOPHIE

[*Rising*]: Good morning.

[*The boy puts the basket on the desk and exits quickly at the right.* SOPHIE *takes up the basket, goes to one of the drawers, pulls it out and files the letters with mechanical rapidity. She empties the basket and closes the drawer. Instantly, the door at the left opens and another boy enters with another basketful of papers. He and* SOPHIE *reach the desk at the same moment.*]

THE BOY

'Morning.

SOPHIE

Good morning.

[*He takes the empty basket and exits at the right.* SOPHIE *takes the full basket and, going to the files, repeats the process. Again she empties the basket and closes the drawer, again the door opens and a third boy,* GEORGE CLARK, *enters with a basketful of papers. As* SOPHIE *sees him, the rear wall between the doors becomes transparent and a landscape is seen: a cheap, suburban bungalow covered with clambering roses.*]

GEORGE

Hello, Sophie. [*He puts the basket on the desk.*]

SOPHIE

Hello, George.

GEORGE

[*Fishing in his pockets*]: I've got something for you, Sophie.

SOPHIE

[*Eagerly*]: For me?

GEORGE

Yes. [*He produces a rather wilted rose.*] A rose.

SOPHIE

[*Taking the flower*]: Oh, thanks, George! [*She smells it.*] Oh, it's just as sweet as it can be. Smell it, George.

[GEORGE *sniffs the flower.*]

SOPHIE

Isn't it sweet?

GEORGE

Yeah. I thought you'd like it.

SOPHIE

[*Fondling the flower*]: I love it. I'm crazy about flowers. I'd better put it in water.

GEORGE

Yeah. It'll keep better that way.

[SOPHIE *takes a paper cup from her desk and, going to the filter, fills it with water.*]

SOPHIE

It was nice of you, George, to buy it just for me.
[*She arranges the rose lovingly in the cup.*]

GEORGE

[*Rather shame-faced*]: Well . . . I didn't exactly buy it. . . . You see, Alice—my sister—

SOPHIE

[*A little disappointed*]: Well, it's lovely, anyhow. And it was nice of you to bring it to me.
[*A moment's pause.*]

GEORGE

Did you go to the pictures, last night?

SOPHIE

No, I didn't.

GEORGE

What did you do?

SOPHIE

Oh, nothing. Just sat around the house.

GEORGE

I couldn't get around last night.

SOPHIE

Were you busy?

GEORGE

Yes.

SOPHIE

Well, I just sat around. I thought maybe you'd come around—

GEORGE

I was going to come, but I couldn't.

SOPHIE

There's a good show tonight: Alma Hope in Blind Youth.

GEORGE

I can't go tonight, either.

SOPHIE

You going to be busy tonight?

GEORGE

Yes.

SOPHIE

I thought maybe . . . But if you're going to be busy.

GEORGE

Yes. . . . You see, Sophie—I'm studying.

SOPHIE

You are?

GEORGE

Yes. I'm taking a correspondence course.

SOPHIE

You are?

GEORGE

Yes. In Automotive Mechanics.

SOPHIE

What's that?

GEORGE

It's all about automobiles. You see, I got a chance to get a good job.

SOPHIE

[*With a sense of foreboding*]: Don't you like your job here?

GEORGE

There's no future here for a young man who wants to succeed. There's thousands of men still tied to routine jobs because they haven't the courage and the vision to reach out for the larger success they want to attain.

SOPHIE

What kind of a job do you want to get?

GEORGE

[*Rather hesitatingly*]: Well, you see—it's this way —I've got an uncle and he's a foreman in an automobile factory— Maybe I've told you about him?

SOPHIE

No.

GEORGE

Didn't I? Well, anyhow, he's got this big job in the Howard plant out in Detroit—

SOPHIE

Detroit? That's out West somewheres, isn't it? [*The landscape begins to fade out.*]

GEORGE

Yes. Michigan. So he's been writing me to come out and he'll give me a good job. And so I guess I'll take him up on it.

SOPHIE

When—when are you going?

GEORGE

Oh, I don't know. Next week, I guess. Tuesday, maybe.

SOPHIE

Next week!

GEORGE

[*Forensically*]: Yes. I realize what each day's delay is costing me. It means that other and perhaps inferior men are stepping into the place that is mine by right. There's no moment like the present for making a firm decision. That's why I'm taking this course, see? It's the Franklin Correspondence School, the institution that has helped carry thousands of men to the goal of their dreams. [*He takes a leaflet out of his pocket and reads*]: "The route of organized training versus the road of routine experience." This tells you all about the school and the great work it does. "Franklin training lifts you out of the crowd." It says here that—

SOPHIE

George—is it far?

GEORGE

Where? To Detroit, you mean?

SOPHIE

Yes.

GEORGE

Sure. It's way out in Michigan. It's—well, I don't

know just how far it is. But it's a good distance. It takes you all night to get there.

SOPHIE

All night?

GEORGE

Yes. You sleep on the train. My uncle wrote me about it. You have to go on a sleeping-car.

SOPHIE

I guess you won't be coming to New York very often.

GEORGE

[*With a laugh*]: I guess I won't. Summers maybe, if I get a vacation. That is, if it don't cost too much. I'm going to save my money, when I get out there. Gray matter alone can bring no man success. To climb into the bigger place that is always just beyond reach, a man must combine brains with industry and thrift.

SOPHIE

Do you think you'll like it out there?

GEORGE

Sure, I'll like it. My uncle says there's a big future there.

SOPHIE

Won't you—won't you be kind of lonesome?

GEORGE

I guess I won't have time to be lonesome. I'll be working all day and studying nights. . . . Of course, I'll miss you, Sophie.

SOPHIE

Will you?

GEORGE

You bet I will. About as much as I'll miss anybody, I guess.

[SOPHIE *averts her head.*]

GEORGE

Why—what's the matter, Sophie? You're not crying, are you? What are you crying for?

SOPHIE

Nothing. Only—only—I kind of hate to see you go.

GEORGE

Well, sure. I hate to go, too. You don't think I like leaving you and my mother and everybody, do you? Only you wouldn't want me to stay here, when I got a big future out there, would you?

SOPHIE

No. I guess I wouldn't.

GEORGE

I never knew anybody as nice as you, Sophie. We've had a lot of fun together. Remember that one time—

SOPHIE

[*Hastily*]: Yes.

GEORGE

If it wasn't that I got a big future—

SOPHIE

Will you write to me, George?

GEORGE

Sure. You bet I will.

SOPHIE

Don't forget, will you?

GEORGE

Of course, I won't forget. And you write to me too, will you?

SOPHIE

Yes. Sure I will.

GEORGE

Don't you forget, either. I guess I'll be kind of lonesome, at that, until I get acquainted. [*Extending his hand*]: Well, wish me luck, Sophie.

SOPHIE

I wish you lots of luck, George.

GEORGE

Thanks, Sophie. But I guess I'll make good, all right. Capacity plus perseverance spells success. Twenty-five years ago, some of our biggest captains of industry were no better off than I am today. Well, good-bye; I'll see you again before I go.

SOPHIE

Good-bye, George.

[*He exits at the right.* SOPHIE *stands for a moment looking after him and fighting back her tears. Then she takes up the basket* GEORGE *has left and, going to the files, begins filing again. The door at the right opens and three men enter:* JAMES BRADLEY, MAXWELL HURST *and* EUGENE LANDRAY. BRADLEY *is youngish, brisk, well-dressed;* HURST *is somewhat older—florid and rather foppish;* EUGENE *is of a more delicate and sensitive mold than the other two. As the men enter,* SOPHIE *stops her work and stands self-consciously by the files.*]

BRADLEY

Come right in, gentlemen. This is one of our filing-rooms. [*To* SOPHIE]: Go right on with your work, miss.

[SOPHIE *resumes her work—nervous and self-conscious.*]

BRADLEY

These are what we call our record files. Every letter, written by anyone in our organization, is typed in quadruplicate. The original is mailed. The first copy goes to the personal files of the writer. The second copy goes to the general office files. The third copy is filed here for purposes of record—a safeguard against the possible loss or destruction of the other copies.

HURST

Great system!

BRADLEY

We pride ourselves upon our system. We spare neither trouble nor expense in our efforts to bring it to that perfection which is our ultimate goal. A corps of experts is constantly working to give our organization its maximum efficiency, to make it function one hundred percent. The wasteful business methods of a generation ago have been relegated to the discard. We have learned the value of time, gentlemen. These offices are equipped with every known device for the saving of time and labor and the promotion of efficiency. The men who have made the Subway Construction Company what it is believe that the gods of commerce serve most gen-

erously those who make best use of their finest tools. It is our—

HURST

Pardon me a moment! That's a great phrase. I'd like to use it.

BRADLEY

Certainly.

HURST

[*Scribbling on an envelope*]: Gods of commerce . . . their finest tools. Thanks.

BRADLEY

Take this room, for example. It is perfectly adapted to the purpose for which it is intended. As you see, it is built solid, from floor to ceiling, with filing-cabinets. Not an inch of space is wasted. By eliminating windows, we not only economize space, but we provide, as well, working conditions that are almost ideal. Through those ventilators, two hundred cubic feet of purified air an hour are pumped into the room—maintained always at an even temperature: no draughts, no dust. The light is artificial and indirect. Its color and intensity have been determined by a long series of expert tests. It never varies: day and night, summer and winter, rain or shine, it is always the same; unvarying in its brightness and efficiency. We have improved upon nature, gentlemen.

HURST

[*Scribbling*]: Yes . . . improved upon nature.

BRADLEY

The Subway Construction Company is the wonder-worker of the modern world. It performs miracles with steel and concrete. The ancient world had no marvels comparable to the subways and the sky-scrapers we build. Take this building—built by us—a master-work of construction—

[*He stops as he notices that* HURST *is writing furiously.*]

HURST

[*Without looking up*]: Go right on, Mr. Bradley. I've got an inspiration.

BRADLEY

There's not a stick of wood in this building—all steel and concrete—from foundation to tower. It cost—

HURST

[*Excitedly*]: Listen to this: [*He reads*]: Built for eternity, they are of yesterday and today. Fit emblems of the rule of the Dynasty of Dynamics. A greater power than the Pharaohs erected them, not as memorials of a dead past, but as monuments of an age of achievement. Their foundations are bound into the chambered

rock and their pinnacles pierce the clouds. [*He looks up*]: How do you like that, Mr. Bradley? Landray, what do you think?

EUGENE

It's very graphic.

BRADLEY

Yes. Excellent. But don't let yourself run too much to generalities. We want a story that's packed full of facts.

HURST

Oh, of course. That's just an introductory paragraph—a bit of color. [*To* EUGENE]: Landray, we can use a sketch of this room.

[EUGENE *begins to make a rough sketch of the room.*]

BRADLEY

[*While* EUGENE *is sketching*]: Steels walls. Concrete floor. Steel furniture. Nothing breakable or inflammable.

EUGENE

[*As he finishes*]: All right.

BRADLEY

Now, take a look at these files.

[*As they approach the files,* SOPHIE *moves away awkwardly.*]

BRADLEY

Stay right where you are, miss. [*He slides a drawer in and out.*] Roller bearing files. Built like a sky-scraper, yet a child can operate them with a touch of the finger. These files have a capacity for five thousand letters per drawer, with full folder and guide equipment. They are fitted with standard, positive, lock-compressors. [HURST *stifles a yawn.*] Each envelope has a colored tab to indicate it belongs within a small group in its division, thereby preventing misplacement. The upper files, as you see— [*Turning to* SOPHIE]: Just show us how easily they work, miss.

[SOPHIE, *very nervous, moves a ladder over and begins to mount it.* HURST *and* EUGENE *watch her with interested attention.*]

BRADLEY

The ladder, also, is equipped with roller-bearings.

HURST

[*To* EUGENE; *sotto voce*]: Nice pair of legs.

[SOPHIE *pulls one of the upper drawers in and out, several times.*]

BRADLEY

You see how easily they work. A minimum of effort. That's all, miss. [*As* SOPHIE *descends the ladder*]: Now, I want to show you a device we have installed

for the comfort of our employees. No effort is spared in keeping up the morale of our organization. We believe that an organization is no stronger than its least loyal employee and so we are constantly making provision for the welfare and contentment of our staff. Now, take this filter-cooler.

[*While* BRADLEY *is talking,* HURST's *attention wanders to* SOPHIE, *who has resumed her place, at the file. As he stares at her, her dress becomes diaphanous, revealing the outlines of her figure. She feels uneasy and confused, writhing under* HURST's *unremitting gaze.*]

BRADLEY

[*Demonstrating the cooler*]: These coolers eliminate the constant expense of bottled water, furnishing clean, pure, live, running water, chilled and filtered at the moment it is drawn. The cooler is all metal with an inch and a half of cork-lining all around, with baked enamel on metal.

[*Towards the end of* BRADLEY's *speech* EUGENE, *whose attention, too, has wandered to* SOPHIE, *whispers something to* HURST. HURST *nods an affirmative and waits for* BRADLEY *to finish.*]

HURST

[*As soon as* BRADLEY *stops talking*]: Landray's just made a good suggestion, Mr. Bradley. He thinks that a

sketch of this young lady here, sitting at the desk with that little flower in front of her, in the midst of all these filing-cabinets, would be a good touch.

BRADLEY

[*Frowning*]: No. I don't care for that kind of thing. I want a plain, straight-forward business story, without any sentiment in it.

HURST

I don't like to take issue with you, Mr. Bradley, but it's been my experience that a bit of color never does any harm. This is a big enough story to interest the general reader, if we can capture his attention. And a little romantic touch like that is just the thing to turn the trick.

BRADLEY

Well, you know more about that end of it than I do. If you think it will help popularize—

HURST

You bet I do. Everybody likes a little bit of sentiment —we're all human. Landray will give us a nice line drawing; we'll stick some poetic caption on it and you take my word for it, we'll hook a lot of fellows that might get away. [*To* SOPHIE]: Now, miss, if you'll come and sit at the desk here.

[SOPHIE *complies, nervously.*]

EUGENE

I needn't keep you and Mr. Bradley for this.

HURST

Oh, we'll wait, while you do it. How's the pose, Landray?

EUGENE

[*To* SOPHIE, *gently*]: Your head a little more to the right, please.

HURST

[*Unctuously*]: Head a little more to the right. [*He moves her head.*] Look at the birdie. Hands like this. [*He arranges her hands. She shrinks from his touch.*]

EUGENE

That's all right, now.
[*He sketches hastily.*]

HURST

[*Inspired*]: One touch of nature makes the whole world kin! That's the caption!

[EUGENE *goes on sketching. The others are motionless.* SOPHIE *is painfully self-conscious.* HURST *stares lewdly at her.* BRADLEY *waits impatiently.*]

BRADLEY

[*As* EUGENE *finishes*]: Finished?

EUGENE

Yes.

BRADLEY

We'll go on to the accounting department, then. This way, gentlemen.

[*He leads the way to the door at the right.*]

HURST

[*Leering at* SOPHIE]: Good morning, miss.

SOPHIE

[*Half-audibly*]: Good morning.

EUGENE

[*Kindly*]: Thank you for your trouble.

SOPHIE

[*As before*]: You're welcome.

[*The three men exit.* SOPHIE *looks after them, for a moment, then goes slowly to the file and finishes emptying the basket. As she turns away and approaches the desk, a boy enters with a full basket. He puts it down, takes up the empty basket and exits.* SOPHIE *goes to the files and begins filing, with mechanical rapidity. The clock, in the distant tower, strikes ten, slowly and sonorously.*]

[*The Curtain Falls*]

SCENE TWO

Setting by Walter Walden

THE SUBWAY

SCENE TWO

[*The subway. In the middle of the stage is the platform of a subway car. Around it is blackness.*

Facing the audience is the outer door of the car, solid steel breast-high and, above that, glass, through which the heads and shoulders of the crowd upon the platform are visible. Beyond, is the other entrance door.

The train is moving. One hears the rush and rumble of it, the rattling of the chains that link the cars, the grinding of a flat wheel, the occasional tooting of a whistle. There is a rapid, regular alternation of lights, as the train sweeps by the lamps affixed to the walls of the tunnel.

In one corner of the platform, her shoulder close to the glass window, is SOPHIE. *With cramped arms, she holds an open book before her, trying to read despite the vibration and the shifting lights. She looks pale, jaded;—now and again, her lungs pant a protest against the insufficiency of the vitiated air.*

The platform is crowded—with men, mostly. They are all about SOPHIE, *crowding in upon her. A fat man, with heavy jowl and thick lips. A thin man, with sharp nose and chin, beady eyes and a straggly moustache. A*

man with flaring nostrils and fangs and cruel eyes. A man with a grinning, hairy face. A dozen others—filling the platform. Some try vainly to read tightly-folded newspapers. One or two shout inarticulately above the din. But for the most part, they stand silent, immobile, staring vacuously, imbecilely.

The train rattles on, the loose chains banging, banging, banging. Then the speed slackens, the noise diminishes, the lights alternate less rapidly.

The faces on the platform grow tense, muscles taut with the anticipation of battle. The readers lower their newspapers. SOPHIE *closes her book. Her lips are drawn, her eyes a little terrified.*

The air brakes whistle. The train comes to a stop.]

THE GUARD'S VOICE

Times Square! Times Square!
Change here for Gran' Cen-tral!

[*The lights of the station platform, beyond the rear door, reveal dimly the waiting crowd. The occupants of the car are alert, half-crouching, awaiting the onslaught. The rear door rolls back.*]

THE GUARD

Times Square! Times Square!
Change here for Gran' Cen-tral!
Let 'em off! Let 'em off first!
A little lively gettin' off!

[*Two or three of the men on the platform fight their way off. Beyond, uniformed* STATION POLICE *hold back the waiting crowd.*]

THE STATION POLICE

Let 'em off! Let 'em off!
Lively gettin' off!

THE GUARD

Van Cortlan' Park! Van Cortlan' Park train!
Watch your step gettin' off! Watch your step!

THE STATION POLICE

All aboard! All aboard!
Van Cortlan' Park train!

[*The crowd outside hurls itself upon the train. Those already on the platform are crowded, crushed, swept from their footing.* SOPHIE *is pressed close against the door, her arms pinioned, unable to move.*]

THE GUARD

All aboard! All aboard!
A little lively gettin' on!

A WOMAN'S VOICE

[*Shrilly*]: My arm! Look out for my arm!

A Man's Voice

Look out for the lady's arm!

The Station Police

Inside! Step inside!
Plenty o' room inside!
Lively! Lively gettin' on!

The Guard

Van Cortlan' Park! Van Cortlan' Park Express!
Watch your step! Watch your step! Watch your step!

The Station Police

That's all! That's all!
No more room!

A Falsetto Voice

Lots o' room on the roof!
[*A burst of laughter.*]

The Guard

Step up! Step up!
Lots o' room inside!
[The Station Police *savagely pull off the three or four men, who are still struggling for a foothold on the car platform. The starting-bell breaks into its harsh clanging. The* Station Police *hurl*

themselves upon the crowd, which blocks the closing door. SOPHIE *moans, as her neighbors are catapulted upon her. The door closes. The train moves on. Again the roar and the rattle, the alternating lights.*

SOPHIE *is crowded, crowded into her corner. Her body is imprisoned by the bodies of the men who surround her. She can move nothing but her head. But wherever she moves it, there is the face of a man, only inches away, breathing upon her. She closes her eyes, opens them again, presses her face against the glass.*

The roar grows louder, becomes deafening. A train approaches from the opposite direction. As it sweeps by, the rapidly flickering lights blot out the platform.

The train has gone. The roar diminishes. The platform is visible again. The men are closing in upon SOPHIE.

But they all wear masks now; hideous, grotesque, animal masks: a dog, a pig, a monkey, a wolf, a rat.

She turns her head, sees them, sees the animal faces. A shriek. BLACKNESS.]

[*The Curtain Falls*]

SCENE THREE

Setting by Walter Walden

SOPHIE'S HOME

SCENE THREE

[SOPHIE'S *home. A mean, ugly room. The broad, vertical stripes of the wall-paper suggest the bars of a cage. Windows at the right. Entrance-door at the left. At the rise of the curtain,* ANNIE SMITH *is discovered at the window down-stage, operating a sewing-machine. She is plain, pinched, drab. Up-stage, at the other window,* MRS. SMITH, *a middle-aged woman with graying hair, is busily ironing. The ironing-board rests upon the window-sill and the table. In the middle of the rear wall, is a cuckoo-clock, which ticks loudly.*

After a moment or two, the door opens and MR. SMITH *enters. He wears the uniform of a subway-guard and carries a huge bundle of newspapers under his arm. The others pay no attention to him, nor he to them. Without removing his cap, he seats himself in the only arm-chair, and putting the heap of newspapers beside him, takes up one and begins to read.*

A few moments later, TOM SMITH *enters, smoking a cigarette. He is under-sized and rather pasty-faced. He flings his hat upon a chair, takes up a handful of newspapers from the pile beside* MR. SMITH, *seats himself, props his feet up on the table, begins to read. As he*

finishes his cigarette, he lights another from the stub.

The door opens again and SOPHIE *and* EUGENE *enter. From the moment of their entrance, the action of the others becomes more mechanized and rhythmic:* ANNIE'S *pedalling,* MRS. SMITH'S *ironing,* MR. SMITH'S *and* TOM'S *turning of pages. They pay no attention to* SOPHIE *or* EUGENE, *throughout.*]

SOPHIE

This is where I live.

[EUGENE *looks about the room.*]

MRS. SMITH

I'll never get this ironin' done. I been at it all day. And it ain't half done yet.

MR. SMITH

Steel Trust Cuts Twenty-seven—Million—Dollar Melon.

ANNIE

Let me get my hands on her—that's all. I'll break her neck.

TOM

Giants May Cinch Flag Tomorrow.

[*He continues to light one cigarette after another, coughing intermittently.*]

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK

Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo!

EUGENE

Have you a large family?

SOPHIE

There's four, besides me.

MR. SMITH

Experts Forecast Fifty-five Million Population for Greater City in Nineteen Ninety.

MRS. SMITH

What's the good of havin' children? They don't do nothin' for you, when they grow up.

EUGENE

Are your parents living?

SOPHIE

Yes.

TOM

Eli's Gridiron Outlook Bright, Says Dooley.

ANNIE

He'll never come back to me now. I know he'll never come back.

SOPHIE

My father works in the subway. He's been working there ever since it opened. He gets tired, standing all day.

MR. SMITH

Gilmore Estate Appraised at Nineteen Million, Six Hundred and Eighty-seven Thousand, Nine Hundred and Sixty-two Dollars and Forty-three Cents.

EUGENE

It's a long ride for you, every night.

SOPHIE

You get used to it.

MRS. SMITH

You slave your life away for them, when they're little, and when you get old, what have you got to show for it?

TOM

Guiness Says He'll Put Oshinsky to Sleep in Fourth Round.

EUGENE

How old are you?

SOPHIE

Eighteen.

MR. SMITH

Airman Sets New Altitude Mark at Forty-eight Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty-seven Feet.

ANNIE

I wouldn't take him back, if he begged me on his knees. I'm through with men.

SOPHIE

I got the job through the business school I went to. You see I took a course. They gave me a letter to Mr. Tuthill—he's Mr. Bradley's assistant—and that's how I got the job.

EUGENE

How long have you been there?

SOPHIE

Well, it's over a year, I guess.

MRS. SMITH

Children, nowadays, ain't what they were when I was a girl. I could work myself to death and they wouldn't lift so much as a finger to help me.

MR. SMITH

Scientist Sets Age of World at Three Billion.

SOPHIE

Tom—he's my brother—he works in a bank. He's assistant-receiving teller now. The bank closes at three o'clock, but he has to stay till six. Sometimes he has to stay all night. The doctor told him he's not very strong.

ANNIE

If I hadn't married him, I'd have married somebody else. And one is just as bad as another.

TOM

At That, Mutt Can Flash a Lot of Class.

EUGENE

Do you still feel faint?

SOPHIE

No, I feel all right now. [*With a self-conscious laugh.*]: I don't know what came over me.

MRS. SMITH

They should of had a mother like I had—always naggin' at them. Then maybe, they'd show me some respect.

ANNIE

What's the use, anyhow? What's the use of anything?

MR. SMITH

Gross Opera Receipts Hang Up New Record.

SOPHIE

Well, you see, there's Saturday afternoons. I pretty nearly always go shopping. And Sundays—I don't know—there's always little things to do around the house, Sundays.

MR. SMITH

Tidal Wave Death-toll Five Hundred Thousand.

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK

Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo!

TOM

Lipton to Make New Attempt to Lift Cup.

SOPHIE

Are they really going to have a picture of me?

EUGENE

Yes, of course.

SOPHIE

When is it coming out?

EUGENE

Not for several months. I'll send you a copy.

MRS. SMITH

Then they get married and leave you. And the only time you ever hear from them is when they're in trouble.

MR. SMITH

War Department Asks for Appropriation of Eight Hundred and Thirty-nine Million Dollars.

EUGENE

Must you ride in the subway?

SOPHIE

It's the quickest way. You see, I've got so far to go.

ANNIE

What does he see in her anyhow? She's just a bum—just a common, ordinary bum.

SOPHIE

My mother says I'm lazy. I guess I am. I never get up till the alarm-clock rings and then I rush out of the house. Sometimes, I don't even have time to eat breakfast. She thinks I don't behave the way I should.

TOM

Bluebottle, Fifty-to-One Shot, Wins Realization.

EUGENE

Evenings. You have your evenings free, haven't you?

SOPHIE

[*Self-consciously*]: Yes.

MRS. SMITH

I'm gettin' old, I guess. I must be gettin' old.

ANNIE

Two kids on my hands. What chance have I got?

MR. SMITH

Dry Agents Seize Nineteen Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty-four Gallons of Rum.

SOPHIE

Were you ever on the Coney Island boat?

TOM

Mat Title at Stake in Garden Bout.

EUGENE

Fresh air. You should get more of it.

ANNIE

I guess I'm not as good-looking, as I used to be.

MR. SMITH

Contents of Pharaoh's Tomb Priceless, Says Expert.

EUGENE

[*Taking* SOPHIE's *hand*]: Good-night, then, Miss Smith.

SOPHIE

Good-night, Mr. Landray. It was awful nice of you—

EUGENE

It was a great pleasure.

[*He goes out.* SOPHIE *looks after him, for a long moment, then turns away towards the others. They pay no attention to her.*]

SOPHIE

[*Half-apologetically*]: I don't know what came over me. Only—all of a sudden—I felt kind of dizzy. Everything seemed like it was going around. I guess I must have fainted. Maybe it was the air, or I don't know what. His name is Mr. Landray. He's an artist. He made a picture of me, down in the office. So when he saw them carry me out, he said he'd take me home. They were going to take me to the hospital, but he said he knew me and he'd take me home. We came in a taxi—all the way from Seventy-second Street. I still feel a little bit dizzy. I guess it must have been the air. It was nice of him to take me home. He talked so nice, too. He said—he said he'd come to see me some time—

[*She stops and looks from one to another. They all go on, mechanically, as before.*]

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK

Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo! Coo-coo!

[SOPHIE *looks all about, as though searching for some means of escape. Then she comes down, towards the audience. A curtain, consisting of broad, vertical strips, corresponding to the wall-paper pattern, is lowered, between* SOPHIE *and the audience. She looks out, between the strips, as though she were in a cage. Then she turns slowly away, takes an apron from behind the door, puts it on and begins mechanically picking up the newspapers, which* TOM *and* MR. SMITH *have discarded.*]

TOM

Six Day Grind Begins Monday.

MR. SMITH

Subway, in Record Day, Carries Two Million Three Hundred and Ninety-seven Thousand, Four Hundred and Twelve.

[SOPHIE *mechanically picks up and folds the newspapers.*]

[*The Curtain Falls*]

SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

[SOPHIE's *bedroom. A tiny cubicle, containing only a narrow, iron bed, a small dresser and a chair. A narrow window, at the right, behind the bed. The room is in darkness, save for a flood of moonlight, which streams upon the bed, revealing* SOPHIE, *in her nightdress, kneeling beside the bed, her face to the audience. At the rise of the curtain, her head is buried upon her outstretched arms, her loose hair all about her. For a long moment, she kneels thus, motionless.*

From the court, through the window, comes a medley of noises: phonographs playing jazz, a crying baby, a quarreling couple, the honking of automobiles, in the street beyond.

Slowly SOPHIE *raises her head, shakes back her straying hair and, still kneeling, begins to speak.*]

SOPHIE

[*Her lips move silently at first, but gradually her words become audible*]: Dear God . . . I'm so tired tonight . . . so tired. I want to sleep. Let me sleep sound tonight, dear God. . . . Those awful dreams, sometimes. . . . Somebody chasing me, chasing me for

miles . . . I can feel him getting closer and closer. . . . I can't run any more. . . . My legs are all stiff, as if I was dead or something. . . . I can't run. . . .

[*She shudders*]:

Oooh! And when you fall down all those stairs. They say if you ever get to the bottom, it kills you. I don't want to die—don't let me die.

[*Drowsily*]:

Now I lay me down to sleep.

[*With a laugh*]:

Gee, I haven't said that since I was a kid.

[*Her attention is caught by a sudden blare of jazz.*]

Gee, that's a swell record.

[*She hums a few bars.*]

It makes you feel all—I don't know—sort of like you don't care what happens. . . . Like that night . . . I oughtn't to have let him kiss me. . . . But—I don't know. It was so nice and cool on the water. And the waves sort of splashing. . . . His hair kept tickling my cheek. . . .

[*She laughs.*]

He's got funny hair—all rough and sort of—just like a big dog.

[*She laughs, then becomes sober again.*]

Kissing . . . I don't see what's so wrong about it. . . . Anyhow, it was only that one time. . . . He said he'd write to me . . . I hope he won't forget. . . . Dear Jesus, don't let him forget . . . George, George,

George. . . . I wonder is it far to Detroit. . . . He said he had to sleep on the train. . . . Do they have beds on the train, I wonder? . . . Detroit, Michigan. . . . Way out West, somewhere. . . . Maybe, we'll get married, some day. Then I'd be Mrs. George Clark. Gee, wouldn't that sound funny. . . . A pound of butter. Send it please. Mrs. George Clark. . . . I'm so tired. . . . But I don't feel like sleeping. . . . If there was only somebody to talk to. . . . They think I'm only a kid. . . . Anyhow, it's—it's not them I want to talk to. God bless mother. God bless father. God bless Annie. God bless Tom . . . Tom's too fresh. Always hurting me . . . and kidding me about . . . him . . . Mister . . . Mister Landray.

[*She claps her hands to her cheeks.*]

My face is all hot. I hope I'm not getting sick. Dear God, don't let me die. I'm too young to die. I want to live. . . . If we'd only move to the country. . . . But they won't. . . . We could have a little house somewhere . . . with flowers . . . violets and roses and daisies. . . . I love roses . . . and, in the morning, you hear the birds singing—like you read about in books. . . . Maybe, he'd come to see us, sometimes. . . . We could sit around on the porch . . . or maybe go for a walk. . . . He said he'd come to see me, sometime. . . . I wish tomorrow was Sunday. . . .

[*She begins to cry.*]

George said he'd take me to the Island, Sunday. . . .

I wonder if he knows any girls in Detroit. . . . Now, I'll have to stay home and help Annie with her dress. . . .

[*Vehemently*]:

I won't stay home and help Annie. . . . I'll kill myself, that's what I'll do. . . . Oh, dear Jesus, why do you make me ride in the subway? . . . I hate it, hate it, hate it. . . . They put their hands on you . . . all over you. . . . But I'm scared to say anything . . . I don't know what to say. . . . Oh, my sweet Jesus, don't let them touch me like that. . . . I could run away. . . . That's what I'll do, I'll run away . . . Saturday. . . . But where can I go? . . . twelve dollars. . . . If they caught me, I might get sent to a reform school. . . . Maybe, I could get a job in the movies . . . I guess I'm not pretty enough. . . . He thinks I'm pretty. . . . He told me so. . . . I'm getting all hot again. . . . I could get a job in the country, maybe . . . I'm afraid. . . . The way some of them look at you. . . . It makes you feel as if you were all undressed. . . . He's different. . . . When he touched me, I didn't mind. . . . He's so gentle . . . so good. . . .

[*Hesitantly*]:

Eu—Eugene. . . .

[*Fearfully*]:

Dear God, I'm not a bad girl. . . . I wouldn't say it out loud . . . only . . . just to myself. . . . I

don't see the harm. . . . Eugene . . . George. . . . I like Eugene better. . . . It's . . . it's like music . . . Eugene. . . . Dear Jesus, make me beautiful . . . I want to be beautiful. . . . Maybe if I bought a new lip-stick. . . . He said I'm pretty, though. . . .

[*Gleefully*]:

I wonder what the girls will say, when they see my picture in the magazine. I hope it comes out soon. . . . Oh, God, I hate the office so. . . . The dust. . . . Where does it come from? . . . There's no windows or anything like that . . . but the files are always full of it. . . . It makes me cough. . . . I hope I don't get consumption . . . like Alice Duffy . . . Oh, dear God, don't let me get consumption. . . . I'm too young to die . . . not nineteen yet . . . that's too young to die. . . . It's terrible to die . . . never to see or hear anything again . . . to get all cold . . . and they throw in dirt. . . . I'm afraid. . . . Suppose you weren't really dead . . . just sort of fainted . . . and they buried you. . . . Oh, I'm afraid, I'm afraid, I'm afraid. . . . Mother! Mother!

[*She looks about fearfully.*]

They'll hear me in a minute. . . .

[*She listens tensely, then resumes. The noises outside have gradually diminished and softened.*]

I'm a silly fool. . . . But if I could only tell somebody . . . just tell them things . . . George . . . he's

a lovely boy . . . but . . . I couldn't tell him. . . . He'd—he'd laugh at me. . . . Eugene's hair is all soft and dark . . . and his hands—they're so smooth and gentle when he touches you. . . . But why should he care about me? . . . He's an artist . . . rich . . . why should he care about me? . . . He must know lots of girls. . . .

[*She begins to sob.*]

Oh, God, God, why can't I be happy, too? . . . I'm not so bad, am I . . . no worse than lots of others . . . then why don't you let me be happy? . . .

[*She chokes back her sobs.*]

. . . I'll go to church, Sunday . . . I haven't been in so long. . . . Don't be angry with me, dear God. . . . I know I've been a bad girl . . . But I'll go, Sunday . . . the music is so lovely . . . and Jesus will comfort me . . . I'll go to church, every Sunday. . . . My heart isn't clean. . . . That's what the matter with me. . . . I've had bad thoughts . . . hating people . . . hating my own sister and brother. . . . Forgive me! . . . I know I've been bad . . . but I'll be good, I'll be good. . . . I'm always thinking about boys . . . but I won't any more. . . . And those other things I think of sometimes . . . where do my bad thoughts come from? . . . Oh, I'm so ashamed, so ashamed. . . . Forgive me, dear Jesus . . . Comfort me . . . I love you so . . . Make me like you . . . make my heart as clean as yours. . . . I'm all alone. . . . Love me.

dear Jesus. . . . Take me to your heart. . . . Love me. . . . Love me. . . . I'm so lonesome . . . so lonesome. . . .

[*Her head falls forward upon the bed.*]

[*The Curtain Falls*]

SCENE FIVE

SCENE FIVE

[*The movies. A section of the balcony of a motion-picture theatre. Facing the audience, inside a false proscenium, is a row of five or six boxes or loges. Their fronts are removed so that the interior of each loge is entirely visible. At the rise of the curtain, all the loges are unoccupied.*

Behind the loges, separating them from the unreserved seats, a wide aisle runs right and left. And beyond that, dimly visible, are the tiers of balcony seats. They are sparsely occupied; a few faces only are discernible in the semi-darkness.

Farther back, high up, is the projection chamber, a large box, with several apertures, from one of which streams a shaft of light, which diffuses itself over the heads of the spectators.

At the rise of the curtain, an invisible orchestra is playing the "Storm" from Wilhelm Tell. A girl usher enters, from the right, followed by EUGENE *and* SOPHIE. *The usher holds open the door of the middle loge for them and then, closing it behind them, exits.* EUGENE *and* SOPHIE *come forward and take the two chairs, at the front of the loge. A flicker of light plays over their faces, the reflected light of the screen.*]

EUGENE

Is this all right?

SOPHIE

Oh, it's fine. [*Looking towards the screen*]: What happened, I wonder—a fire?

EUGENE

It's that Oklahoma cyclone, I think. See how that house is twisted half-way round.

SOPHIE

It's awful—all those poor people without any place to live. [*She looks behind her.*] I guess maybe I'd better take my hat off.

[*She removes her hat. The orchestra plays The Stars and Stripes Forever.*]

EUGENE

[*Looking at her*]: That's better. That head wasn't meant to be covered.

SOPHIE

[*Self-consciously*]: I must look a sight.

[*She fumbles for the mirror in her hand-bag and tries to arrange her hair.*]

EUGENE

Yes—a lovely sight. Shall I put your hat somewhere?

SOPHIE

No, I don't mind holding it. I'm glad we got here before the feature comes on. I hate getting in, in the middle of a picture, don't you?

EUGENE

Why—it's so long since I've been—

SOPHIE

[*Surprised*]: Don't you like the pictures?

EUGENE

I think I shall like them, tonight.

SOPHIE

Yes. Everybody says it's the best picture Dick Carlisle ever made. But I think he's always good. Did you see him in The Straight Path?

EUGENE

No.

SOPHIE

That was a lovely picture. He played the part—[*The orchestra plays Sailing.*] Oh, just look at the size of that boat!

EUGENE

Yes. That's the new Cunarder.

SOPHIE

Gee, I'd like to go on a boat like that.

EUGENE

Where would you like to go?

SOPHIE

Oh, I don't know. Anywheres. I've never been on a real, big boat. [*She reads*]: "Out of respect for Mr. Volstead, pretty Miss Virginia Davis performs the christening ceremony, with a bottle of grape-juice."

[*She laughs together with the rest of the audience. The orchestra plays Nobody Knows How Dry I Am. More laughter and applause.*]

SOPHIE

Oh, look at it slide into the water!

EUGENE

She makes her maiden voyage next week. She's the last word in marine architecture. Every first-cabin room has a private bath. There are six dining-rooms. One of them is open day and night. Another is a conservatory of tropical plants. Then there are two swimming-pools —one warm and one cold—

SOPHIE

A swimming-pool on a boat!

EUGENE

Yes, and a fully-equipped gymnasium. And a huge ball-room—I forget the dimensions—with decorations by that brilliant young Russian artist—Dubrinsky.

SOPHIE

[*Wonderingly*]: Have you been inside?

EUGENE

No; but a friend of mine is sailing and I'm going to see him off. [*Suddenly*]: Perhaps you'd like to go, too.

SOPHIE

[*Excitedly*]: Oh, would they let me? I'd be crazy to go!

EUGENE

I'll take you with me.

SOPHIE

Oh, would you?

EUGENE

Yes—I'll be happy if you'll let me.

SOPHIE

When is it?

EUGENE

Tuesday morning. She sails at eleven, I think.

SOPHIE

[*Dashed*]: Oh—in the morning. Well—I couldn't—I couldn't go then. You see, I'll be working.

EUGENE

Couldn't you get off for an hour or two?

SOPHIE

They wouldn't let me off for that. And I kind of hate to lie about it. Anyhow, they might get on to me.

EUGENE

Perhaps if I spoke to your office-manager—what's his name?

SOPHIE

Mr. Bradley. No, he wouldn't let me off. He gets mad if you're ten minutes late, mornings. [*Downcast*]: Gee, I'd love to see the inside of a boat like that.

EUGENE

[*Patting her hand*]: Well, never mind! We'll make it up in some other way. [*The orchestra plays Toyland.*] Won't we?

SOPHIE

[*Self-consciously*]: Yes, I guess so. Oh, look! Aren't they cunning?

EUGENE

[*Bored*]: Yes.

SOPHIE

Look at the one with jam all over his face! He looks just like little Jimmy downstairs.
[*She gazes absorbed at the screen.*]

EUGENE

[*Looking at Sophie*]: Incredible naïveté. Incredible.
[*The orchestra plays the Jocelyn Lullaby.*]

SOPHIE

[*Sentimentally*]: Aa-h! Aren't they just too cunning!
[*A pause, her eyes fixed on the screen.*] He keeps looking at me all the time. [*The orchestra stops.*]

EUGENE

Are you comfortable?

SOPHIE

Oh yes. These are lovely seats. I never sat in a box before.

EUGENE

Do you come here often?

SOPHIE

Well—quite a lot. That is, I used to, before my friend went out West.

EUGENE

Your friend? You mean a boy friend?

SOPHIE

Yes. George Clark. He and I were friends. Only he got a job in Detroit. [*Scattered applause from the audience.*] Oh that's—I forgot his name. He has a beautiful voice. [*A piano begins to play the accompaniment to I Hear You Calling Me.*]

SOPHIE

Did you ever hear John McCormack sing that on the phonograph?

EUGENE

Yes.

[*A third-rate tenor sings the first verse of I Hear You Calling Me. Sophie listens, in rapt attention.*]

EUGENE

A little shop-girl.

SOPHIE

It's beautiful. It's beautiful. It's beautiful.

[*As the last falsetto notes die out, Sophie applauds rapturously, then stops abashed at "Shs!" from the audience. The piano begins the accompaniment, again.*]

SOPHIE

He has a beautiful voice, hasn't he?

EUGENE

You respond to music, don't you?

SOPHIE

[*Somewhat puzzled*]: That's one of my favorite songs.

EUGENE

Have you—

[*The tenor begins singing the second verse.*]

SOPHIE

[*Her fingers on her lips*]: Sh!

[*She listens eagerly.*]

EUGENE

And yet—there's something. . . . What is it, anyhow?

[*Sophie hums the melody softly.*]

EUGENE

A child.

[*There is a burst of applause, as the song comes to an end.*]

SOPHIE

[*Applauding vigorously*]: I hope he sings again.

EUGENE

Have you ever been to the opera?

SOPHIE

No. I've heard lots of records though. Caruso—and lots of others. I guess the opera would be too deep for me.

EUGENE

Some of them are quite simple—pure melody. You'd enjoy them.

SOPHIE

Well, maybe some day I'll go. Have you ever been?

EUGENE

[*With a smile*]: Yes.

SOPHIE

It must be wonderful. I guess he isn't going to sing any more. Does the feature come next?

EUGENE

I'll look. [*As he raises his program close to his face, his elbow strikes her shoulder.*] Oh, I beg your pardon!

SOPHIE

Oh, that's all right. Yes, this is the feature. "Cosmic Pictures presents Dick Carlisle in Heart of Erin" . . . I feel as if I was shaking all over.

[*The orchestra plays Killarney. Throughout the scene there is music: an "arrangement" of familiar airs designed to underscore the varying moods of the unfolding screen-drama.*]

EUGENE

You're sure I didn't hurt you?

SOPHIE

No, not a bit. Really, you didn't. "Tucked away among the verdant hills of the little Emerald Isle, lie the far-famed Lakes of Killarney—a handful of flawless jewels flung down by the bounteous Creator."

EUGENE

Nice panorama. That photographer knows his job.

SOPHIE

I read that this picture was really taken in Ireland. They sent a special company over.

EUGENE

Do you read about the pictures before you see them?

SOPHIE

Well, I usually read Pictureland and The Silver Sheet. And sometimes some of the others.

EUGENE

See that light effect on those rocks in the foreground!

SOPHIE

"These quiet waters, whose crystal loveliness drew travellers from the ends of the earth, served also to mirror the budding beauty of Kathleen O'Connor. Kathleen O'Connor—Lillian Lucille." Oh, doesn't she look sweet!

EUGENE

Not half as sweet, as you.

SOPHIE

[*Self-consciously*]: Oh, Mr. Landray!

EUGENE

Let her alone. Let her alone.

SOPHIE

He's always saying things like that.
[*She looks about uneasily.*]

EUGENE

Do you want something?

SOPHIE

No. Only it's a little hot in here.

EUGENE

Shall we go—or find other seats?

SOPHIE

No. It's all right. [*She turns her attention to the screen again.*] "Lord Hubert Orville, pampered son of the Duke of Cambria and heir to his father's millions—Rodney Dean." Oh, I hate him! He always takes such mean parts.

EUGENE

Eighteen! In two years perhaps—. What nonsense!

SOPHIE

[*Amused*]: Oh! Will you look at the old lady smoking a pipe!

EUGENE

Having a grand old time, too, isn't she?

SOPHIE

Look, she's falling asleep. [*Excitedly*]: There it goes! [*She laughs.*] Ooh! Right on her bare foot. [*Eugene and the rest of the audience laugh, too.*]

SOPHIE

"Shure, it's lucky I am not to be wearin' shtockins. I'd have burnt a hole in 'em shure." [*She and the audience laugh again.*] Isn't she killing?

EUGENE

It's as though I weren't here. . . . This boy friend. . . . What did she mean by that. . . . Oh, rubbish! She's a child. . . .

SOPHIE

"Robert Masters of the American Consular Service, on a holiday visit to the Killarney Country—Dick Carlisle." There he is! Don't you think he's handsome?

EUGENE

Yes, he is. [*Quizzically*]: Are you in love with him?

SOPHIE

[*Self-consciously*]: Oh, Mr. Landray! As though, he'd look at anybody like me. But I think he's a wonderful actor!

EUGENE

Literal . . . and rather stupid . . . and yet. . . . Oh, I'm a damn fool!

SOPHIE

"Can I get a drink for my horse, Miss?" . . . My cheeks are all hot again.

EUGENE

I wonder how long this inane drivel lasts.

SOPHIE

"Indeed you can, sir, and a cup of cold milk for yourself if you wish it." . . . He looks something like Dick Carlisle. His eyes . . . I never noticed it till just now.

EUGENE

What is there about her? . . . What is it?
[*His hand moves slowly over, until it barely touches hers.*]

SOPHIE

He's touching me. He's touching me.

EUGENE

Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop!

SOPHIE

"No, Lord Orville, I'm keeping my lips for the man who'll make me his bride."

EUGENE

Stop, you fool!
[*He moves his hand away.*]

SOPHIE

It was an accident, I guess. I wish I were beautiful like Lillian Lucille.

EUGENE

Why shouldn't I? Damn it, why shouldn't I?

SOPHIE

"You little fool. He has a wife and child in America!" O-oh!

EUGENE

A girl of that type at eighteen. . . . Once she's awakened . . .

SOPHIE

"Very well, if you desire proof, look at this" . . . Oh, the poor thing!

EUGENE

No . . . I shouldn't . . .
[*His hand steals over and touches hers again.*]

SOPHIE

"And with the passage of the hours."

EUGENE

Stop! Stop!

SOPHIE

He's touching me again. . . . I don't know what to do.

EUGENE

What's happening to me? . . . It's impossible. . . . She's a child.

SOPHIE

"I love you, Kathleen." . . . Why don't I take my hand away? Why can't I take it away?

EUGENE

Is she trembling? Or am I?

SOPHIE

"And then the dawning of a new day." . . . Oh, if the music would only stop!

EUGENE

[*Involuntarily*]: By Jove!

SOPHIE

[*Startled*]: What?

EUGENE

That's a lovely bit—do you see?—those misty trees against the brightening sky. Stirring, isn't it?

SOPHIE

Oh, it's beautiful—beautiful. It almost makes me cry.

EUGENE

Does beauty always stir you so?

SOPHIE

What? I don't know—I don't know what makes me feel like this.

EUGENE

She has a soul. . . . Has she a soul? . . .

SOPHIE

"Meanwhile Masters despairingly prepared to return to London."

EUGENE

No! I won't!

[*He takes his hand away again.*]

SOPHIE

"Shure and it's sorry we'll be to see you go, sir." . . . Oh, God, why don't you let me die?

EUGENE

No!

[*With mechanical deliberation, he takes her hand in his. She submits passively, without any attempt at resistance.*]

SOPHIE

I oughtn't to let him.

EUGENE

What's happening to me? It's incredible. . . . A little shop-girl.

SOPHIE

"Suspecting nothing, Kathleen walks into the trap set for her by Lord Orville." . . . His knee . . . I oughtn't to let him.

EUGENE

Why don't I stop? Why don't I stop?

SOPHIE

What's the matter with me? I'm getting dizzy. Oh, why doesn't the music stop?

EUGENE

I must go on with it—go on with it—go on with it!

SOPHIE

"Hurry, Mr. Masters, hurry—before it's too late." . . . I'm afraid!

EUGENE

God, why doesn't she respond?

SOPHIE

Oh, he's hurting me—he's hurting me! He'll break my fingers.

EUGENE

Now! Now! At last!

SOPHIE

"You're a beast, Lord Orville—a vile beast." . . . I can feel his nails. They're digging into me. Go on! Hurt me some more.

EUGENE

I mustn't lose my head. . . . A child. . . . A woman. . . . What has she done to me?

SOPHIE

"Your title means nothing to an American citizen, Lord Orville. It's man to man between us, now." . . . Let me go. . . . Let me go. . . . Squeeze me tighter!

[*Eugene suddenly releases her hand and, throwing his arm about her, draws her close to him.*]

SOPHIE

[*Faintly*]: Don't! Don't!

EUGENE

[*Hoarsely*]: Sophie!

[*He draws her closer. Their heads touch.*]

SOPHIE

"Time and Kathleen's loving care bring back strength to Masters.". . . Tighter! Tighter! Why doesn't he squeeze me tigher!

EUGENE

[*Springing up*]: Let's get out of here!

SOPHIE

[*Mechanically*]: The picture isn't over yet.

EUGENE

That doesn't matter. [*He draws her to her feet.*] Here—your hat. Put it on.

SOPHIE

[*As she puts on her hat*]: "It's your heart I want—the heart of Erin." I'm ready.

EUGENE

Have you everything—your bag?

SOPHIE

Yes.

EUGENE

Come along, then.

[*He fumbles awkwardly, at the door of the loge, then succeeds in opening it and pushes her out ahead of him. He follows her, into the aisle, and puts his arm about her. As they stumble along the aisle together, the orchestra swells into a great sensuous blare.*]

[*The Curtain Falls*]

SCENE SIX

SCENE SIX

[EUGENE'S *studio. At the extreme right, down-stage, is the entrance-door. From this, and leading into the room itself is a narrow passageway formed by the wall of the bedroom and the invisible "fourth wall." This passage opens into a fair-sized studio, with a door to the bedroom at the right. There is a skylight, with movable shades. At the left, is a fireplace. The room is tastefully, but rather meagrely furnished.*

It is night. The shades are drawn, the lamps lighted. EUGENE *is discovered, reading a book. After a moment or two, his attention wanders and he sits staring ahead of him.*]

A VOICE

[*Toneless, impersonal*]: Liar! Liar!

[*He clenches his fists, then tries vainly to attend to the book again. After a moment, he flings the book aside, rises, lights a cigarette and walks about nervously.*]

THE VOICE

[*As before*]: Liar! Liar!

[EUGENE *tosses aside his cigarette, throws himself into*

a chair and runs his fingers nervously through his hair. A buzzer sounds. He jumps up and hurries to the speaking-tube.

EUGENE

Yes. . . . Yes, come right up.

[*He is about to go to the door, then notices that a large arm-chair is littered with books and papers. He begins to clear it hastily.*]

THE VOICE

[*More faintly than before*]: Liar!

[EUGENE *puts out all the lights, except the lamp behind the arm-chair. Then he goes to the entrance-door and, opening it, waits. A moment or two later,* SOPHIE *appears. She enters quickly, quite breathless.* EUGENE *closes the door, then, taking both her hands, presses his lips to them.*]

SOPHIE

[*Panting*]: I'm all out of breath.

EUGENE

Sit down. [*He leads her to the arm-chair, in which she seats herself.*] Why do you dash up the stairs like that?

SOPHIE

I don't know. . . . I thought . . .

EUGENE

No one is likely to see you here. And if anyone did . . .

SOPHIE

I thought . . . Joe Carpenter—he's a boy works down at the office . . . I thought I saw him . . .

EUGENE

There's nothing to be afraid of. . . . [*Putting his hand on her heart.*] Still thumping?

SOPHIE

I guess it wasn't him.

EUGENE

Take your things off.

SOPHIE

I can't stay long.

EUGENE

Take your hat off. [*He removes her hat.*] Nice hair! [*He kisses her hair.*]

SOPHIE

I've got to get home early. . . . I'm supposed to be taking a walk. . . .

EUGENE

Your coat.

[*He helps her remove her coat and then carries her things to another chair.*]

SOPHIE

What time is it?

EUGENE

Not nine yet.

[*He sits on the arm of her chair and caresses her hair.*]

SOPHIE

I oughtn't to be here.

EUGENE

You want to be, don't you? [*No answer.*] Don't you?

SOPHIE

[*In a low voice*]: Yes.

EUGENE

Then why shouldn't you?

SOPHIE

It doesn't seem right. . . .

EUGENE

Nobody knows what's right, Sophie.

SOPHIE

Something tells me . . . something inside me. . . .

EUGENE

Fear. . . .

SOPHIE

Suppose somebody . . . my mother . . .

EUGENE

Yes. Fear. . . .

SOPHIE

I don't know. . . ! I don't know. . . !

EUGENE

I love you, Sophie!

[*He bends down and kisses her. She puts her arms about him and returns his kiss, then frees herself.*]

SOPHIE

If we could only . . .

EUGENE

No, Sophie.

SOPHIE

I'm not good enough for you.

EUGENE

You're too good.

SOPHIE

No. I know. . . .

EUGENE

You don't know.

SOPHIE

This way . . . it just doesn't seem right. . . .

EUGENE

You'd be throwing yourself away.

SOPHIE

I'd just love you . . . that's all I want . . . just to love you. . . .

EUGENE

I'd make you miserable.

SOPHIE

No . . . no, you wouldn't . . . no, you wouldn't. . . .

EUGENE

You don't know me. . . . I'm a creature of moods . . . mercurial. . . . That kind of life would gall me, chafe me. . . . I know myself . . . you'd suffer.

SOPHIE

I'd always love you . . . always. . . .

EUGENE

You'd suffer, I tell you. . . . Leave things as they are . . .

[*He kisses her, but she does not respond.*]

SOPHIE

I was born bad, I guess.

EUGENE

Sophie, you mustn't! [*He suddenly drops to his knees beside her.*] You mustn't say things like that.

SOPHIE

Oh, Eugene. . . . [*She fondles his hair, a moment, then drops her hand, despairingly.*] If I only knew what to do. . . .

EUGENE

[*Taking her hand*]: Sophie. . . .

[*Impulsively he drops her hand and springing to his*

feet, turns out the light. The room is in darkness, save for some rays of moonlight, which filter down between the shades.]

SOPHIE

[*Frightened*]: Oh, don't. . . !

EUGENE

Artificial light . . . I hate it. . . . It makes you see things artificially. . . . That office of yours. . . .

SOPHIE

Put on the light!

EUGENE

No.

[*He throws his arms suddenly about her and kisses her. They cling together. At last, Sophie pushes him away.*]

SOPHIE

Put on the light. . . . I'm scared!

EUGENE

There's a moon, tonight.

SOPHIE

[*Almost in a whisper*]: I want the light.

[EUGENE *finds the cords which control the shades. The room is flooded with moonlight.*]

EUGENE

That's better. . . . Natural light. . . . Reflected sunlight. . . . Life-giving light, made mysterious and subtle. . . .

SOPHIE

Oh, God . . . I. . . !

[EUGENE *picks up some pillows and throws them on the floor at Sophie's feet.*]

SOPHIE

[*Rising suddenly*]: It's late . . . I got to go. . . .

EUGENE

No.

SOPHIE

I got to. . . . Supposing Beatrice . . . supposing she went to the house. . . .

EUGENE

Who?

SOPHIE

I'm supposed to be taking a walk with her . . . Beatrice Meegan . . . she might go around to the house. . . .

EUGENE

You mustn't go yet.

SOPHIE

Please. . . .

EUGENE

I want to talk to you. . . .

SOPHIE

I got to. . . . They'll be wondering. . . . [*A pause.*] They'll be sitting around . . . Annie . . . Mother . . . just sitting around . . . like they do every night . . . I got to go. . . .

[*She turns away impulsively and, throwing herself on the pillows, buries her head in the chair.* EUGENE *stands watching her, for a moment, then walks softly over to her and takes her by the shoulders.*]

EUGENE

Come sit on my lap.

SOPHIE

No. I want to put my head on your lap.

[EUGENE *seats himself in the chair.* SOPHIE *puts her head in his lap, her face towards the audience. They sit for a time in silence,* SOPHIE *motionless,* EUGENE *caressing her hair and throat.*]

SOPHIE

[*At length*]: Talk to me.

EUGENE

I love you.

SOPHIE

There's nobody like you. . . . Nobody's ever told me things like you have. . . .

EUGENE

There's no one like you. . . . No one has ever given me what you have. . . .

SOPHIE

Me. . . ! A wonderful man like you. . . !

EUGENE

Vision. . . . You've given me vision. . . . Inspiration . . . the germ of a masterpiece. . . .

SOPHIE

You're just saying that. . . .

EUGENE

No . . . that very first day . . . you were in the office there and I came in. . . . You did something. . . . I've never been so stirred. . . . And it's grown . . . it's grown. . . . It's taken hold of me . . . swept me . . . this vision you've given me.

SOPHIE

I'm nobody. . . .

EUGENE

You've given me a masterpiece . . . an epic . . . shall I tell you? . . .

SOPHIE

I love you so. . . !

EUGENE

It's called The Subway . . . it's an epic . . . an epic of industrialism. . . .

SOPHIE

The Subway. . . !

EUGENE

It fills me . . . obsesses me. . . . The city . . . the city . . . steel and concrete . . . industrialism, rearing its towers arrogantly to the skies. . . . Higher and higher . . . deeper and deeper. . . . What did he say, that fellow Hurst? . . . "Their foundations are bound into the chambered rock. Their pinnacles pierce the clouds." . . . Up and up . . . fists of steel shaking defiance at the skies . . . still higher and higher. . . . All mankind joining the mad mechanistic dance . . .

bondsmen to the monsters they have created . . . slaves to steel and concrete. . . . Do you understand. . . ?

SOPHIE

[*Half-afraid*]: No.

EUGENE

And under the earth . . . miles and miles of burrows . . . hundreds of miles . . . walls of concrete . . . rails of steel . . . winding and winding . . . the subway . . . the entrails of the city. . . . Speed. . . . Speed. . . . Faster and faster . . . a labyrinth . . . an inferno . . . a great roaring and the clatter of steel upon steel. . . . A subway train . . . a monster of steel with flaming eyes and gaping jaws . . . Moloch devouring his worshippers . . . Juggernaut crushing his tens of thousands. . . . A subway train. . . . Down there under the ground . . . under the steel towers that scrape the skies. . . . A subway train . . . roaring . . . roaring . . . the beast of the new Apocalypse. . . . "And no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark of the beast." . . .

SOPHIE

[*Lowering her eyes*]: Don't. . . ! Don't. . . !

EUGENE

Then . . . and then . . . war . . . war . . . war.

. . . Destruction rained from the skies. . . . The new Apocalypse. . . . The defiant towers tottering . . . toppling . . . crashing . . . down to earth . . . down to earth. . . . Do you see them . . . these proud towers. . . . I shall out-Doré Doré, Sophie. . . . Mankind . . . animals now . . . a herd of terror-stricken animals . . . seeking refuge . . . fleeing to their burrows . . . down under the earth . . . down in the subway . . . millions . . . millions. . . .

SOPHIE

[*Moaning*]: Oh. . . !

EUGENE

The city razed flat . . . a mountain of rubble and twisted steel . . . and humanity penned . . . penned in the subway . . . every orifice choked with rubble . . . great pipes bursting . . . gas-mains . . . sewers . . . and mankind perishing . . . drowned . . . suffocated . . . buried alive in the grave of concrete and steel it has built for itself. . . .

SOPHIE

Don't. . . . Don't. . . ! Don't tell me any more!

EUGENE

Wait. . . ! A thousand years pass . . . ten thousand years. . . . A forest has overgrown the mountain

of debris. . . . Then . . . man again. . . . Scientists . . . an expedition from the new civilization on the Congo. . . . They dig . . . dig . . . down through the mountain of concrete and twisted steel . . . down . . . down to the subway . . . down to that heap of bones . . . the bones of these civilized millions. . . . Nothing but bones . . . bones . . . and a glass eye . . . and some false teeth . . . and a handful of blackened coins . . . and a steel key that unlocked a steel box in a steel vault . . . and a pair of jade earrings from the five-and-ten cent store . . . all that remains of Western civilization. . . .

SOPHIE

Please . . . please . . . I don't know what you mean. . . .

EUGENE

[*His voice softening*]: Listen. . . . Listen, Sophie. . . . Suddenly . . . in that sepulchre . . . in the midst of that charnel-house . . . they come upon . . . are you listening, Sophie. . . ?

SOPHIE

Yes . . .

EUGENE

They come upon a girl . . .

SOPHIE

A girl. . . !

EUGENE

Yes . . . the body of a young girl . . . preserved miraculously . . . inexplicably . . . through all those centuries . . . a young girl asleep . . . warm . . . radiant . . . in that chamber of death. . . . A vision. . . . A vision and a reality . . . a vision of beauty, Sophie . . . eternal beauty . . . beauty that survives death . . . that endures forever . . . that cannot be destroyed. . . . [*He raises her to her knees and takes her face in his hands.*] You're that girl, Sophie . . . that vision . . . that's what you've given me . . . a vision of beauty . . . a new faith . . . ecstasy. . . .

SOPHIE

[*Sobbing*]: Eugene . . . Eugene . . . I'm different . . . I'm different . . . I don't know. . . . You've made everything different . . .

EUGENE

Yes . . . we've found an escape . . . you and I . . . a compensating beauty . . . an escape from the ugliness that was crowding us . . . crowding us. . . .

SOPHIE

Yes . . . everything . . . the whole world . . . it all seems different . . . beautiful and different. . . .

EUGENE

We've made a new world for ourselves. . . .

SOPHIE

Yes . . . Yes . . . I just want you. . . .

EUGENE

Sophie . . .

[*He presses his lips to her forehead.*]

SOPHIE

[*Putting her arms about his neck*]: Love me, Eugene . . . love me. . . !

[*He puts his arms about her and draws her onto his lap.*]

EUGENE

Sophie. . . . My Sophie. . . . You're beautiful. . . . Beautiful. . . . I want you, Sophie . . . I need you . . . I need you. . . .

[*He puts his mouth to hers. Their lips cleave together.*]

[*The Curtain Falls Slowly*]

SCENE SEVEN

SCENE SEVEN

[EUGENE'S *studio. Night. At the rise of the curtain, the stage is in darkness. A moment later, there is a knock at the entrance-door. Then there is a pause, followed by another knock. After another brief interval, a key is inserted in the lock and the door is opened.*

In the light from the hall, SOPHIE *is seen. She stands hesitantly for a moment, then removes the key from the lock, enters the room, and switches on the light. Then she closes the door and puts the key into her purse. For a moment or two, she stands looking about, uncertainly. Then she crosses to the door of bedroom.*]

SOPHIE

[*Knocking timidly*]: Eugene!

[*A brief pause*]:

Eugene!

[*Receiving no reply, she opens the bedroom door, looks into the room, and closes the door again. She looks at her watch, uncertain whether to go or stay; but finally decides to wait. She takes up a magazine and, seating herself, begins to turn the pages. But she cannot fix her attention, and, putting down*

the magazine, she rises and walks about the studio with nervous impatience. Her attention is caught by some drawings, which are scattered about rather carelessly. She picks them up and looks at them. They are charcoal nudes of herself. She looks at them, one by one, half-pleased and half-ashamed. Then she finds a large portfolio and slips the drawings into it. There is a sharp knock at the door. SOPHIE, *startled and frightened, puts her hand to her heart and stands looking towards the door in panic. The knock is repeated.*]

ANDERSON'S VOICE

Eugene!

[*He knocks again and rattles the knob.* SOPHIE, *not knowing what to do, crosses and opens the door.*]

ANDERSON

[*As* SOPHIE *opens the door*]: Why in hell don't you—?

[*He breaks off in surprise, as the door opens and he sees* SOPHIE. ANDERSON *is seen in the doorway. He is about forty-five, well-dressed, and with a manner that is direct and authoritative.*]

ANDERSON

Oh, I beg your pardon! Isn't this Mr. Landray's apartment?

SOPHIE

Yes. Yes, it is. But he's not here, right now.

ANDERSON

[*Looking closely at her*]: Oh, I see. Do you happen to know when he'll be back? I'm Robert Anderson, a friend of his.

SOPHIE

Why—I—I think he ought to be here soon. He usually—

[*She stops in confusion.*]

ANDERSON

[*His eyes fixed upon her*]: Perhaps you're waiting for him, yourself?

SOPHIE

[*Confused and ill-at-ease*]: Yes, sir. We—there was something I wanted see him about. [*As* ANDERSON *continues to stare at her*]: The—door was open—so I thought maybe I'd just come in and wait.

ANDERSON

I see. [*Satirically*]: Just like Eugene to go out and leave the door open! Careless fellow, isn't he?

[SOPHIE *looks at him swiftly, not quite certain of his meaning.*]

ANDERSON

I wonder if you'd mind if I waited a few minutes for him, myself? I've something rather important to talk to him about.

SOPHIE

He ought to be back soon, now.

ANDERSON

Thanks. I'm not anxious to climb those four flights again. [*Entering the studio and looking about*]: Fine way for a civilized man to live!
[*A pause.*]

SOPHIE

I guess I won't wait any longer.

ANDERSON

Oh, you mustn't let me drive you away.

SOPHIE

I—I was just going to go, anyhow.

ANDERSON

That's too bad. I was hoping we'd have a chance to get acquainted. I'm an old friend of Eugene's. Perhaps he's mentioned me to you.

SOPHIE

Yes, sir.

ANDERSON

He's told me all about you, of course. And I've seen you with him here and there.

[SOPHIE, *ill-at-ease, does not answer.*]

ANDERSON

Pretty indifferent Tristan, the other night, wasn't it?

SOPHIE

[*Puzzled*]: What?

ANDERSON

Didn't I see you with Eugene at Tristan, Monday night?

SOPHIE

Oh! Was that the opera?

ANDERSON

Mean to say you've forgotten it, already? Surely you're not yet as blasé as all that.

SOPHIE

Oh no! How could anybody ever forget the opera? I just didn't know what the name of it was. [*Rapturously*]: Oh, it was just like being in heaven.

ANDERSON

Yes, I suppose at your age one still gets a kick out of Wagner. Do you go to the opera often?

SOPHIE

No, sir; it's the very first time I've ever been.

ANDERSON

Oh, really! Well that *must* have been an experience. But you should get Eugene to take you often.

SOPHIE

He promised to take me again.

ANDERSON

Well, see that he lives up to it. Has he been making any more drawings of you?

SOPHIE

[*Ashamed*]: No, sir; not lately.

ANDERSON

You're an excellent model.

SOPHIE

[*Hastily*]: I'm not a model. I work in an office.

ANDERSON

Yes, of course. I know you're not a professional model. I only meant that you have a very good figure.

SOPHIE

He didn't tell me he was going to show them to anybody.

ANDERSON

[*With a laugh*]: You evidently haven't known many artists! Between us, though, I don't think that figure drawing is Eugene's forte. Some of his imaginative things are excellent. But his line lacks sureness. Don't you think so?

SOPHIE

I think he's a wonderful artist.

ANDERSON

Well, hardly that. I'm afraid you're letting your emotions get the better of your critical judgment.

[SOPHIE *looks at him uneasily, not knowing whether he is mocking her or not.*]

ANDERSON

I don't deny that Eugene has talent. But his work reflects his character. He's lazy and vacillating—that's why he's never been able to get anywhere.

SOPHIE

[*Rallying to Eugene's defense*]: He says that nobody understands really good artists—that it's only bad artists that people like.

ANDERSON

Nonsense! Don't let him take you in, with that kind of talk. The trouble with Eugene is, he has no stamina. He never sticks to anything long enough to put it over. [*With impersonal casualness*]: The right woman could do wonders for Eugene.

SOPHIE

[*Intensely*]: I know I'm not good enough for him. [*A moment of silence.*]

ANDERSON

How old are you? Eighteen—nineteen?

SOPHIE

Yes.

ANDERSON

Has it ever occurred to you that you are a very foolish girl?

SOPHIE

I love him.

ANDERSON

When I first knew Eugene, he was in love with a Russian girl named Elizabeth. He talked to her in very bad French. I remember he used to try to sell me sonnets which she had inspired. You must have been just about entering kindergarten at the time.

SOPHIE

I know he's been in love with other girls.

ANDERSON

I suppose you've read that synopsis or scenario or whatever it is—that rigmarole of his about the subway?

SOPHIE

Yes, sir. He read it to me.

ANDERSON

He wants to take six months or a year to make a book of it. Expects me to publish it, when it's done.

SOPHIE

He told me.

ANDERSON

Seems to think that he's a Dante or a Milton. Well, I have no intention of publishing it.

SOPHIE

[*Resentfully*]: Why?

ANDERSON

Because, my dear young woman, I couldn't sell a thousand copies of it. That's why.

SOPHIE

[*Boldly*]: He says that you're very rich—that you can afford to take a risk.

ANDERSON

Oh, does he? Well, tell him that I didn't get rich by backing losers. You'd be doing him a service, if you didn't encourage him.

SOPHIE

He just tells me things, that's all. I don't understand anything about things like that. I know I'm nobody and that I'm not good enough for him. Only, if you're a friend of his, why won't you help him?

ANDERSON

Are your parents living?

SOPHIE

Yes, sir.

ANDERSON

What do they think about all this?

SOPHIE

They don't know anything about it. He says I've made him happier than anybody.

ANDERSON

Don't you ever look ahead?

SOPHIE

I'm not sorry. I'm not a bit sorry. You can't make me sorry.

ANDERSON

Do you expect him to marry you?

SOPHIE

[*Chokingly*]: He never said he would.

ANDERSON

Where do you think it's going to end?

SOPHIE

I didn't do anything I didn't want to do.

ANDERSON

You're standing in his way.

SOPHIE

[*Despairingly*]: He loves *me* too.

ANDERSON

Has he told you about my offer?

SOPHIE

[*Only half listening*]: No.

ANDERSON

I'm bringing out a new magazine. Tripe, with a fancy sauce, that will make the readers think themselves sophisticated. I've offered Eugene the art editorship. It will mean that he'll have to spend most of his time in Europe.

SOPHIE

He—he didn't say anything about it.

ANDERSON

[*Looking at his watch*]: Well, I don't think I'll wait. Can I leave a message for Eugene with you?

SOPHIE

Did he—did he say he would go?

ANDERSON

Not yet. But you'd better make up your mind that he will. Tell him, please—

[*A key is heard in the lock.*]

ANDERSON

Never mind; I guess he's here now.
[*The door opens and* EUGENE *enters.*]

ANDERSON

Hello, Eugene; I'd just about given you up.

EUGENE

[*Surprised at seeing* ANDERSON]: Why hello, Robert.
[*He shakes hands with* ANDERSON.] Hello, Sophie.
[SOPHIE *does not answer.*]

EUGENE

[*To* ANDERSON]: If I'd known you were here—
[*Breaking off*]: By the way, do you two know each other?

ANDERSON

Oh yes, indeed! In fact, we've improved the opportunity and have been having quite a heart-to-heart talk.

EUGENE

[*After a pause, in which he looks from one to the other*]: Well, sit down.

ANDERSON

Sorry, but I've got to run. I just stopped by to tell

you that I'm pushing the magazine scheme right ahead. There's an organization meeting at my office, tomorrow at two, and I'm counting upon you to be there.

EUGENE

[*Greatly perturbed.*]: I don't know whether I'll be able to make it.

ANDERSON

You'll have to make it. I want to get this thing lined up, right away.

EUGENE

[*Angrily*]: You know very well that—[*Breaking off abruptly*]: I'll 'phone you in the morning.

ANDERSON

Just as you like. But if you can't get to the meeting, you may just as well count yourself out of the whole thing. [*To* SOPHIE, *before* EUGENE *can reply*]: Good night, Miss Smith. Sorry to have intruded. [*To* EUGENE]: Two o'clock sharp. [*As he goes out*]: Why don't you get yourself a decent place to live in?

[*He goes out quickly, closing the door behind him.* EUGENE *makes a step forward, as though to recall* ANDERSON, *then stops and stands uncertainly, looking at the door, his back to* SOPHIE, *who has*

remained motionless and silent throughout, her face devoid of expression. EUGENE *slowly gains control of himself and, turning, stands for a moment looking at* SOPHIE, *who does not move or give any sign of awareness of his presence. Then, forcing an air of gaiety, he walks deliberately over to* SOPHIE *and puts his arms about her.*]

EUGENE

[*With affected lightness*]: Good evening.

[SOPHIE *gives no sign.*]

EUGENE

[*Taking her chin in his hand and raising her face to his*]: Good evening.

[*She makes no reply. He kisses her upon the mouth. She submits, but does not respond. He looks at her intently, his arms still about her.*]

EUGENE

[*Gently*]: What's he been saying to you, h'm?

[*She does not answer. He puts one arm about her waist and leads her, unresistingly, to the large chair, in which he seats himself and draws her down upon his lap. She sits there, passive and unresponsive, and without looking at him.*]

EUGENE

[*Gently stroking her hair*]: Sophie, darling—

[*She looks at him swiftly, her face filled with anguish, then suddenly clings to him and buries her head in his shoulder. He goes on stroking her hair.*]

[*The Curtain Falls*]

SCENE EIGHT

SCENE EIGHT

[SOPHIE'S *bedroom. The stage is dark. All that is visible is* SOPHIE'S *bed, in which she is tossing about nervously. There is a constant murmur of voices, faint and indistinct. Now and then, a low snickering laugh.* SOPHIE *tosses and tosses. Suddenly, she sits bolt upright, brushes the hair back from her eyes and looks about, frantically. The voices go on and on. She throws herself upon her pillow again and pulls the covers over her head. The voices grow louder. She pushes off the covers again, then suddenly throws them off entirely and lies there, clad only in her nightgown, her face buried in the pillow. Then she shivers with cold and pulls the covers up again. The voices grow clearer, less confused. Then gradually, individual voices begin to emerge and become articulate.*]

EUGENE'S VOICE

[*Calling softly*]: Sophie! Sophie!

[SOPHIE *sits up in bed, listening.*]

EUGENE'S VOICE

Sophie! Sophie!

[*The other voices fade out.*]

EUGENE'S VOICE

Sophie, my little sweetheart. I love you, Sophie.
[*Her face becomes more tranquil.*]

A TENOR VOICE

[*Sings*]: I Hear You Calling Me!
[*She listens intently.*]

EUGENE'S VOICE

Yes, this is the place.

AN OBSEQUIOUS VOICE

What can I do for you, sir?

EUGENE'S VOICE

I want a wedding-ring for this little girl, here. . . . White gold. . . . From Eugene to Sophie. . . . Next week. . . . We're going to be married next week.
[SOPHIE *stretches out her left hand, the ring finger extended.*]

ANNIE'S VOICE

I wouldn't trust a one of them. Not the best man that ever lived.
[SOPHIE'S *arm drops back. A steamboat whistle is heard.*]

ANDERSON'S VOICE

A shop-girl! You'd give up this chance for a shop-girl.

EUGENE'S VOICE

She has a soul—a soul.

CHORUS OF VOICES

She has a soul—a soul—a soul.

SOPHIE

[*Mechanically*]:

Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

A GLOOMY VOICE

There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

SOPHIE

[*Childishly*]: I—I—

MR. SMITH'S VOICE

Pastor Flays Immorality of Younger Generation.

SOPHIE

If I should die before I wake—

MRS. SMITH'S VOICE

[*Scoldingly*]: What are you sittin' up for? Why don't you lay down and go to sleep?

SOPHIE

I can't sleep. Sophie can't sleep.

MRS. SMITH'S VOICE

[*Sings; very tenderly*]:

Rock-a-bye, baby,
On the tree-top;
When the wind blows,
The cradle will rock.

[SOPHIE *nods for a moment. A clock strikes two. An indistinct murmur of voices again.*]

MRS. SMITH'S VOICE

[*Scoldingly*]: Go to sleep, why don't you? Tomorrow's a working-day.

A HOARSE VOICE

Little lively! Little lively gettin' on!

BRADLEY'S VOICE

What's this I hear about you, Miss Smith?

SOPHIE

Well, it's like this, Mr. Bradley—

BRADLEY'S VOICE

We can't tolerate that sort of thing here . . . the

morale . . . the best interests of the organization . . . you'll have to go.

SOPHIE

But if you'll only—

A GLOOMY VOICE

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

EUGENE'S VOICE

It's not wrong. . . . Nothing as beautiful as this is, can be wrong. . . . To deny life—that's the only sin.

A GLOOMY VOICE

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

A WOMAN'S VOICE

Too bad about your daughter, Mrs. Smith.

A WOMAN'S VOICE

She was always such a nice little girl, Mrs. Smith.

A WOMAN'S VOICE

It's awful hard on you, Mrs. Smith.

MRS. SMITH'S VOICE

She was always a bad girl. She never gave me anything but trouble.

ANNIE'S VOICE

Keep away from men! Didn't I tell you to keep away from men?

A LILTING VOICE

These quiet waters, whose crystal loveliness drew travellers from the ends of the earth, served also to mirror the budding beauty of Kathleen O'Connor.

A GENTLE VOICE

He leadeth me beside the still waters. Yea, though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil. For thou art with me.

EUGENE'S VOICE

You're beautiful, Sophie. When I hold you in my arms, life is complete. I ask for nothing more.

ANDERSON'S VOICE

Bunk, Eugene! A commonplace affair with a little nobody.

CHORUS OF VOICES

Nobody! Nobody! Nobody!

[SOPHIE *covers her face with her hands.*]

A GLOOMY VOICE

Even so, every good tree brought forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

ANNIE'S VOICE

What did you expect? What did you expect of her?

MRS. SMITH'S VOICE

I'm through with you. I'm through with you.

MR. SMITH'S VOICE

Parents Refuse Shelter to Wayward Daughter.

SOPHIE

Don't turn me out . . . Mother . . . Father . . . Annie. . . . Oh, Jesus, have pity on me!

A GENTLE VOICE

Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest.

SOPHIE

Oh Eugene! Eugene!

EUGENE'S VOICE

My little girl. . . . My own little girl . . . you mean more to me than anything in the world. . . .

[*She begins to nod drowsily. Softly, the Jocelyn Lullaby is heard.*]

SOPHIE

[*Sleepily*]: Aren't they cunning . . . that little one . . .

EUGENE'S VOICE

[*Dreamily*]: Anything in the world. . . . Anything in the world. . . .

[*She is almost asleep. A sudden, long, snickering laugh, then a loud drunken laugh—a whole peal of laughter. She is wide awake again, quivering with terror, her hand clutching her throat.*]

A HOARSE VOICE

Watch your step! Watch your step!

ANDERSON'S VOICE

The new Cunarder. She sails for Paris next week.

A LILTING VOICE

Your title means nothing to an American citizen, Lord Orville. It's man to man between us, now.

[*A screeching phonograph plays a snatch of Barney Google.*]

A COARSE VOICE

I'll tell you a funny one about Sophie Smith . . .

[*A burst of obscene laughter.*]

A BOY'S VOICE

[*Falsetto*]: Oh, Sophie! . . . Yoo-hoo!

[*Another burst of laughter.*]

SOPHIE

Oh, God! Let me die! Let me die!

[*She throws herself, moaning, upon the pillows.*]

A GLOOMY VOICE

Her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

[*Three sharp rappings as of wood upon wood.* SOPHIE *sits up again.*]

A STERN VOICE

You're a bad girl. . . .

SOPHIE

But, Judge . . .

A STERN VOICE

You're a bad girl. . . .

SOPHIE

But, Judge . . .

MR. SMITH'S VOICE

Prison Term for Delinquent Girl.

A HARSH FEMALE VOICE

Shave her head! Bathe her in carbolic! Give her bread and water!

SOPHIE

Oh, no, no, no!

ANNIE'S VOICE

Bad girl!

MRS. SMITH'S VOICE

Bad girl!

CHORUS OF VOICES

Bad girl! Bad girl! Bad girl!

EUGENE'S VOICE

[*Calling softly*]: Sophie! Sophie!
[*She looks about frantically.*]

EUGENE'S VOICE

[*A little louder*]: Sophie! Sophie!
[*The other voices die out.*]

SOPHIE

Eugene! Eugene!
[*The Liebestod is heard, very faintly at first, then swelling by imperceptible degrees.*]

EUGENE'S VOICE

Sophie dear. . . . Come to me, Sophie. . . . Here. . . . Here in my arms. . . . Closer. . . . Closer. . . . You're beautiful Sophie. . . . Radiant. . . . Give me your lips. . . . Again. . . . Once again. . . . Float

away with me, Sophie. . . . Drift away. . . . Out of the world. . . . Out of life. . . . You and I. . . . You and I, Sophie. . . . We no longer exist. . . . Nothing exists . . . only beauty. . . . Your beauty, Sophie. . . . Your beauty can never die. . . . It's eternal . . . the symbol of all beauty . . . Alpha and Omega . . . the first and the last . . . the beginning and the end. . . . You're life, Sophie. . . . Life and beauty . . . the giver of life and the meaning of life. . . . This moment . . . this ecstasy . . . if we were never to know happiness again this would suffice. . . . If this moment were our last it would be enough. . . . Sophie . . . Sophie . . . my soul . . . my soul. . . .

[*The music ends, in a great burst of swooning voluptuousness.* SOPHIE *sits rigid, transfigured, with extended arms. Then slowly, her muscles relax. She passes her hand feverishly over her throat and cheeks and forehead.*]

SOPHIE

I'm all hot. . . . I'm all hot. . . . My head's all wet . . . and my throat. . . . I'm all dry. . . . I must have fever. . . .

A COLD VOICE

And what else?

SOPHIE

You see . . . you see, I get hot all over. . . .

A Cold Voice

And what else?

Sophie

Sometimes . . . in the morning. . . . Oh, doctor, doctor, I'm so scared, so scared. . . .

A Cold Voice

You're going to die.

Sophie

Oh, doctor, doctor, save me!

A Gloomy Voice

The wages of sin is death.

Mr. Smith's Voice

Girl Dies as Result of Illegal Operation.

A Gloomy Voice

Thou shalt not kill.

Sophie

What have I done? What have I done? I didn't mean to do anything.

A Girl's Voice

[*Whispering*]: Did you hear about Sophie Smith?

A Girl's Voice

No, what about her?

A Girl's Voice

She's going to have a baby.

A Girl's Voice

Ooh, did you hear about Sophie Smith?

A Girl's Voice

No, what about her?

A Girl's Voice

She's going to have a baby.

A Chorus of Girls' Voices

She's going to have a baby.

A Girl's Voice

And she ain't married.

A Girl's Voice

What, she ain't married?

A Girl's Voice

No, she ain't married.

A Chorus of Girls' Voices

She ain't married!

A CHORUS OF GIRLS' VOICES

And she's going to have a baby.

A BOY'S VOICE

Who's your father?

A CHORUS OF BOYS' VOICES

Who's your father? Who's your father?

A BOY'S VOICE

Don't you know who your father is?

A CHORUS OF GIRLS' VOICES

He don't know who his father is.

A BOY'S VOICE

You little bastard!

A BOY'S VOICE

You little bastard!

A BOY'S VOICE

You little bastard!

A GIRL'S VOICE

There she is! Sophie Smith! That's her!

[*An arm shoots out of the blackness, with the forefinger pointing.* SOPHIE *sees it and shrinks away.*]

A Boy's Voice

Sophie Smith! That's her!

[*Another arm shoots out. And another. And another. And another.*]

A Chorus of Voices

That's her! That's her! That's her! That's her!

[*The voices grow louder and louder.* Sophie *tries in vain to escape the pointing fingers. They hem her in. The voices grow deafening. She leaps from the bed and rushes out. Blackness.*]

[*The Curtain Falls*]

SCENE NINE

Setting by Walter Walden

THE SUBWAY

SCENE NINE

[*The subway. A subway station, in the early hours of the morning. The raised platform runs across the stage. The tracks are in the foreground, steel rails gleaming. On the platform, is a row of turnstiles, beside the turnstiles, a large iron gate. Beyond that, the change-booth, in which the attendant is dozing. At the left, the stairs leading to the street. Inside the turnstiles, a bench, a slot-machine, a waste-paper receptacle.*

A moment after the rise of the curtain, SOPHIE *runs down the stairs at the left. She wears a long coat over her nightgown, no hat, slippers on her bare feet. She keeps looking back, nervous and frightened. She hurries to the turnstile, fumbling in the pocket of her coat, for a nickel. She comes through the turnstile, and then down to the edge of the platform, where she peers over, anxiously, to see if a train is visible. As she turns away, she sees a man coming down the stairs. Terrified, she walks away down the platform. The man reaches the foot of the stairs. It is* MAXWELL HURST, *dressed in evening clothes. He looks through the gate, sees* SOPHIE, *then goes to the change-booth, gets change and comes through the turnstile.*

HURST *looks quickly up and down the platform to make sure that they are alone; then he approaches* SOPHIE. *She trembles nervously as he comes near her, then turns and tries to walk past him.*]

HURST

[*Intercepting her*]: Good evening.

SOPHIE

[*In a low, frightened voice*]: Good evening.
[*She tries to pass him again.*]

HURST

What's the matter, little girl? You seem to be in trouble. [SOPHIE *does not answer.*] Let me help you. [*He puts his hand on her arm.*]

SOPHIE

Please let me go.

HURST

Why, dearie, I just want to help you.

SOPHIE

I don't want any help.

HURST

Come on, girlie. Tell me what's the matter?
[*He tries to put his arm about her.*]

SOPHIE

[*Pleadingly*]: Please let me alone.
[*She looks him full in the face, appealingly.*]

HURST

[*With a sudden start of recognition*]: Why—! I've seen you somewhere before. Where was it?
[SOPHIE *does not answer.*]

HURST

Let's see. You—and that fellow Landray. I know! In an office. Filing-clerk. Isn't that it?

SOPHIE

Yes.

HURST

I thought I knew you. Something about you looked familiar. Your hair, I guess. Nice hair. [*He strokes it.*]

SOPHIE

Mr. Hurst, please—

HURST

Remember my name, too, don't you? Funny we should turn out to be old friends. Let's see, your name is—?

SOPHIE

Sophie Smith.

HURST

Yes, sure. [*Taking her hand.*]

HURST

Glad to see you again, Sophie. But what are you doing here, at this time of night?

SOPHIE

I—I couldn't sleep.

HURST

Couldn't sleep? But where are you going?

SOPHIE

I don't know where I'm going. Nowheres.

HURST

Well, what are you doing here—in the subway?

SOPHIE

I don't know. I just ran down here. I—I had to go somewheres.

HURST

[*A little shame-faced*]: Oh!

SOPHIE

Don't they run trains at night?

HURST

Not many, at this hour. Come on, we'll find a taxi.

SOPHIE

No.

HURST

But you can't stay here.

SOPHIE

I'll wait for a train.

HURST

What for? Where do you want to go?

SOPHIE

I don't know.

HURST

You can't do that. You can't just ride around alone at this hour. We'll get a taxi and I'll take you wherever you want to go.

SOPHIE

No. I'll wait for the train.

HURST

I tell you, you can't. You're only half-dressed. [*He turns back her coat.*] Why, you're not dressed at all.

SOPHIE

[*Drawing her coat tightly about her*]: I just ran out. I couldn't sleep.

HURST

Yes. Insomnia. Bad stuff.

SOPHIE

It's awful, when you can't sleep.

HURST

Yes. [*A pause*]: Married man, huh?

SOPHIE

No.

HURST

[*Feeling her forehead*]: Your head's hot.

SOPHIE

[*Shivering*]: It's cold here.

HURST

Yes—the way you're dressed. You'll get sick. [*He takes a flask from his pocket.*] This will warm you up. [*He offers her the flask.*]

SOPHIE

[*Pushing it away*]: No.

HURST

It'll warm you up. [*He thrusts it under her nose.*]

SOPHIE

I don't want it.

[*Suddenly, she seizes the flask and takes a great gulp. Then, coughing and shuddering with disgust, she pushes the flask away.*]

HURST

That's the idea.

SOPHIE

Oh! It burns! It burns!

HURST

It'll warm you up.

SOPHIE

It burns my throat.

HURST

Did he promise to marry you?

SOPHIE

No. He said—

HURST

Well, you see what happens.

SOPHIE

He's an artist. He says—

HURST

Not that fellow Landray?

[SOPHIE *does not answer.*]

HURST

[*With a laugh*]: Ha! Landray!

SOPHIE

[*With sudden fierceness*]: I don't care what you think!

HURST

[*Looking at his watch*]: Twenty minutes after three.

SOPHIE

I feel better now.

HURST

Sure you do. So you believed him, did you?

SOPHIE

I'm not sorry! I'm not sorry!

HURST

And it's all over, is it?

SOPHIE

He's got to go away. [*Vehemently*]: There's nobody like him—nobody!

HURST

How old are you?

SOPHIE

I'll be nineteen next month—the twenty-fifth.

HURST

You ought to know better than to go running around like this at night.

SOPHIE

I couldn't stay in bed. But I'm better now. Only my head—

HURST

Given up your job?

SOPHIE

I can't go back. Just filing letters all day long. The carbon comes off on your fingers. And you never know whether it's rainy or sunshiny or what. And the dust—it sort of gets in your throat. I don't see where it all comes from.

HURST

Suppose you'd met somebody who didn't take a friendly interest in you.

SOPHIE

Can they make me go back home?

HURST

No. But you'd better be careful. A pretty little girl like you—

SOPHIE

I'm not sorry. Only—it seems like just a few weeks—
[*She begins to cry softly.*]

HURST

[*Putting his arm about her*]: Don't cry, Sophie. It's going to be all right. Everything's going to be all right. You've got a good friend in me.

SOPHIE

I know I'm not good enough for him. Only—

HURST

Tell you what we'll do. I'll take you around to my apartment—

SOPHIE

[*Drawing away from him*]: No!

HURST

Give me a chance to finish. I'll go to a hotel. You'll be there all by yourself. Then—tomorrow—when you've had a good rest, we'll talk things over.

SOPHIE

No, I don't want to.

HURST

You can't sit here, all night. And you haven't any place to go. Come along with me.
[*He draws her to her feet.*]

SOPHIE

I don't want to.

HURST

It's just for tonight. You can't spend the night here. If a policeman finds you, he'll take you to the station-house.

SOPHIE

I haven't done anything wrong.

HURST

You're not properly dressed. It's against the law. You'd better come with me.

[*He leads her gradually towards the turnstiles.*]

SOPHIE

I couldn't stay home—I couldn't.

HURST

Tomorrow, we'll fix everything up.

[*He starts to conduct her gently, through one of the turnstiles. She submits passively, then suddenly resists.*]

SOPHIE

[*Holding up her hand*]: Listen!

HURST

What is it?

SOPHIE

A train's coming. Don't you hear it?

HURST

No.

SOPHIE

Yes. I can hear it. Far away.

HURST

Well, never mind about it. It doesn't go our way.

SOPHIE

It's coming nearer. I can hear it coming nearer.

[*She pushes* HURST *firmly aside and walks, trance-like, towards the edge of the platform, her face expressing rapt fascination. A distant rumble is heard, which gradually increases in volume.*]

HURST

Come along. We'll take a taxi.

SOPHIE

Do you hear the noise it makes? It's like the waves. Like the waves on the beach. We went to the beach once. There was lovely music in the dining-room. And we could hear the waves coming up on the beach.

HURST

[*Disturbed*]: Sophie! Come along! It's very late.

SOPHIE

[*Leaning over the edge of the platform*]: I can see it now. I can see it. Way down the track. Far, far away. I can see the lights—the red lights. Like two eyes looking at me. It's coming along—coming along. Crawling

along the track. Oh, why doesn't it go faster? Why doesn't it go faster?

HURST

Come on. Come on. There'll be people on the train. They'll see you.

SOPHIE

Look at the lights! Look at the lights shining on the tracks. All red. Like the moon on the water. Like the moon when it first comes up in the summer-time. Listen to the sound of it. It's getting louder and louder like music. Like music. Like the beautiful music in the opera.

HURST

Sophie! For God's sake! Come along!

[*He tries vainly to pull her away.*]

SOPHIE

It's rushing along, now. Look at it rushing, rushing along. Oh, it's so beautiful. It's so beautiful. I never knew it was so beautiful. Oh Eugene, Eugene! Listen to it! Look at the lights. Red like blood. I'm shaking, Eugene. Like when you kiss me—like when you take me in your arms. I'm so happy—I'm so happy. I want to die. Kiss me, Eugene, kiss me until I die.

[*The roar of the train is almost deafening. The red light gleams upon the tracks.*]

It's singing—everything is singing. My heart. More, more! Tighter! Tighter! Eugene!

[*She wrests herself free from* HURST *and jumps upon the tracks.*]

[*The Curtain Falls*]

THE END

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